

Weekly Message for March 25, 2004

Don't look now, but it's warming up. Ok enough of that.

April is on its way and we have two exciting pieces of legislation that will appear on the agenda for next week's City Council meeting. It is my belief that both will go a long way in improving troublesome spots of our City.

The first deals directly with a problem that the Action Team has been trying to correct during our first three months in office- illegal dumping. This new legislation strengthens the law that was weakened prior to my administration taking office. With this legislation in place, a systems has been developed that will crack down on people who consistently dirty up our City with their trash.

Instead of leaving it in the hands of a judge, we have developed strict guidelines that will punish people based on the number of times they dump, and whether the violator owns a business or is dumping personal items. For first time private violators, we are setting the fine at a minimum of \$100. The fine then rises to \$200 for a second violation, and finally to \$300 for the third occurrence.

For businesses the fines are steeper, based on the theory that businesses produce more trash and cause a bigger eyesore when illegally dumping. Similar to the above, the fines for the first three offenses for businesses are \$250, \$500, and \$1,000, respectively.

Based on the new teeth in the law, we are also going to be promoting something that has long been in the City Code, but never used. Anyone who provides the City with information that leads to a fine against an illegal dumper will be given 25 percent of that fine as a reward. They will also be helping out the community by keeping Troy clean.

The other piece of exciting legislation deals with the growing problem of kids loitering outside of schools, specifically Troy High School and Lansingburgh High School. It is called a school curfew law, and what it says is that any student within 2000 feet of school during a weekday, or during a school function, can be picked up by Troy Police on the basis of loitering. School administrators have long complained they cannot go after kids not on school grounds, and something needs to be done about it. Finally, it will be.

The first time a student is detained they will be held until the parents can pick him or her up. The second time however, the parent is charged with a \$100 fine, AND given 25 hours of community service.

In the first three months of the school year there have been at least 6 major incidents of fighting at Troy High School that have resulted in broken bones and bruises. Thankfully, there has been nothing worse.

However, that does not mean we should sit idly by and wait for something to happen. We will attack this problem before it gets any worse. In the past, people have been told there

were no gangs in Troy. There are gangs in Troy, and we are going to get rid of them one way or the other. One way is to take away the breeding ground they enjoy at schools. This is a small step, but it is a step nonetheless.

The key to this legislation is enforcement. No longer will voluntary compliance be asked for. We must be aggressive if we are to protect our children. Kids should go to school each day with one goal in mind- to learn. They should not have to worry about who is doing drugs, or if someone is going to want to fight them. Everyone had bullies growing up, but now bullies carry weapons and have much stronger agendas.

In the past and future, I mean for this space to be a lighthearted look at what is going on in Troy, and try and promote the agenda of our City. However, with the upcoming vote by the City Council, I wanted to express my passion about these two pieces of legislation and hope for the support of the community.

As usual, if you have any questions, comments, concerns, or complaints please call us at 518-270-4401, or e-mail at the Mayors Office.

Harry Tutunjian
Mayor of Troy